

Subject: Public Safety Philosophy

Meeting Date: March 2, 2023	
Submitted/Presented by/Department: Nate Burkett, City Manager	
Action Type	
<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Item	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion/Direction
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing	<input type="checkbox"/> Informational Only
<input type="checkbox"/> Action/Motion	<input type="checkbox"/> Report
<input type="checkbox"/> Resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Action	
Discussion	
Background	
<p>One of the Council's strategic initiatives for 2022-2024 was to create a public safety philosophy, which recognizes that public safety does not just come from reactive policing.</p> <p><u>What Makes People Feel Safe in a Community?</u></p> <p>Answering this question is complicated because there are so many different perspectives. For example; in our most recent community survey, senior citizens and longer term residents said by a large majority that an increased police presence and better street lighting were very important to make the community safer.</p> <p>Reviewing academic literature a general definition of safe community is when people in the community do not fear potential injury or loss when they are in or outside of their homes. When you think about all of the potential ways that people can experience injury or loss it does not all have to do with policing or fire protection. People can be injured in pedestrian, bike or auto accidents, they can be injured on a playground or they can be injured in their home. People may fear they will lose their child in a shopping mall or that if they leave their personal belongings unattended they will be taken. In addition, people can be afraid of other people. This may be because the crime rate is high or perceived to be high, or they perceive a threat from others. Thus, a comprehensive approach to community safety is needed to genuinely create a safe community.</p> <p>Most approaches to improving or maintaining community safety that can find in the academic literature or in various community safety plans prepared by other communities rightfully focus on crime and crime prevention. This is a reasonable approach because if people fear crime it is more consuming than fearing other potential loss or injury. When people fear crime they tend to stay out of the community, off of the sidewalks and trails, out of the parks and out of the commercial areas. When the average person does not engage in the community it has the perverse effect of reducing the fear of those who may commit crimes of being interrupted or apprehended. The suggestion here though, is to expand somewhat to recognize some of the unique demands and features of West St. Paul.</p>	

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Philosophy/Policy Points for Consideration

Many of the concepts and actions listed below we are already thinking of or already doing. However there is value in clearly stating the policy intent of what we are doing. There is also more that can be done, and more ideas to come if we state our intentions clearly.

Proactive prevention - Proactive prevention is one of the easiest things people can do to both reduce the potential of injury or loss and support overall community safety.

- Programs and initiatives aimed at developing strong habits to avoid being a victim of crime (lock your car doors, lock your house doors, programs to install motion sensitive lighting)
- Programs and initiatives aimed at developing strong habits to avoid household accidents (change your smoke detectors, ladder safety, E-Bike safety)

Building community - Knowing and trusting your neighbors is one of the best and most fun things people can do to support overall community safety.

- Community events such as Cops in the Park, Explore WSP Days
- Encourage rental communities to join together and build community within their buildings and within the entire community

Environmental design - The design and maintenance of our streets, sidewalks, trails, parks and buildings is intended to bring people together, keep the community safer and dissuade potential crime from occurring.

- Continue to support maintenance standards for city infrastructure, businesses and private property
- Build in an intentional community safety review for all city infrastructure projects and private developments using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design ([CPTED](#))

Reliable access to critical services - Community-oriented, well-staffed, and exceptionally trained critical services teams including dispatch, police, fire, mental health and human services response are a vital component of community safety.

- Police Patrol and Fire/EMS Response
- Embedded social worker and mental health response programs

Managing perception - People should understand the reality of community safety through verified and trusted sources.

- Finding ways to be the go-to and trusted source about community safety in WSP
- Strategically dispelling rumors that negatively impact people's perception of safety

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Attachments	
N/A	
Previous Relevant Actions	
N/A	
Alternatives	
N/A	
Financial	
Budgeted: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No Financial Impact
Fund:	N/A
Department:	
Account:	
Amount:	